Population and Environmental Economics

Course Description

The course will have a focus on population economics. We will examine the economic determinants of population change and demographic behavior including household formation, child bearing and mortality and key forms of human capital investment including schooling and migration. We will apply analytical tools of economics to investigate various economic and social consequences of population change and environmental changes.

The course will emphasize a microeconomic approach, however, for some topics we may draw on tools from macroeconomics.

Required Texts and Related Readings

There is no required textbook for the class. Reading material will be placed on the course web page.

Exams, Assignments, and Grading

Grades for undergraduate students will be based on 100 points, distributed as: 15% for four short writing assignments and 10% for one writing research proposal assignment (described on Page 6), 20% for an in-class midterm, and 50% for a 120 minute final. The midterm will be multi-choice questions, while the final will also have calculation and short essay questions. In addition, there will be an in-class presentation (details on Page 7), worth 5 percent for completion. Graduate students will take the exams and write one research proposal by the end of the semester.

Contact Information

email: tianxu@mail.shufe.edu.cn

Office Hours

Office: Room 425, School of Economics
Friday 3:30 pm to 5 pm and by appointment.

Exam dates:

Midterm Exam: Tuesday June 2, 2015 (in class)
Final Exam: TBD

Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. Any violation of the academic code of honor will result in a punishment proportional to the crime, as determined by the instructor and student or through the Honesty Committee process.
Reading List

Topic 1: Introduction and World Population Growth


Topic 2: Theories of the Demographic Transition


Topic 3: Population Aging and Consequences of Population Decline


Topic 4: Malthus and the Population Debate


Topic 5: Population and the Environment


Topic 6: Economic Theories of Fertility


**Topic 7 & 8: Human Capital: Schooling and Migration**


**Topic 9: Health, Morbidity, and Mortality**


### Anticipated Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>History of Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Theories of the Demographic Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Population Aging and Population Decline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Population and the Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Economic theories of fertility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Human Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Midterm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Health, Morbidity and Mortality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Health, Morbidity and Mortality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Migration/Immigration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Writing Assignments

This is a writing-intensive course. During the semester you will submit four one-page summary papers and one longer research proposal paper (each 3 to 5 double-spaced pages). The writing assignments are designed to help you understand and analyze the course material. In the process, my hope is that you will improve your writing skills.

The first secret to good writing is good editing, which means revising. I do a brain dump on the first draft, restructure the document to form a coherent presentation/argument in the second draft and polish stylistic elements in the third draft. This means that I am the only reader of the first draft. Friends (A friend is someone who corrects your errors in private.) may read the second draft while remaining family members and the general public may read the third (and subsequent) drafts.

In this course you will be given practice at revising and editing your writing. Indeed, you are expected to write thoughtfully and revise your work to make it concise and clear.

Due Date Policy: Short writing assignments are due at the start of class on the date assigned. Late assignments are not accepted for credit. Longer writing assignments involving the WF are due by 5:00 on the date assigned. WF papers submitted before a negotiated deadline are counted as “on time.” Otherwise, I will only accept posthumously submitted late WF papers. (Working to the deadline is part of the exercise. (It’s axiomatic that a better product can be produced with more time.) Moreover, late papers will upset the WF’s work schedule.

References: You must cite references for facts and ideas that are not your own. Anything less is plagiarism. (For example, CNN and Time suspended Fareed Zakaria last month after the media documented his plagiarism. He kept his job with Time Inc. because an internal review board ruled his plagiarism accidental.) You may cite class lectures. Anything else should follow standard bibliographic format, such as the style used in the Reading List.

1. one-page summary. An important goal of the course is to teach to read economic literature critically. To help you take an active approach to these readings, you will write brief summaries of four readings listed below. The one-page summaries are due in class on the day the reading is assigned.

The summary should contain a concise summary of the research or concept described in the reading, followed by your critique. (A concise summary can be four or five sentences. Stay focused on major ideas; avoid copying the abstract.) Papers should be typewritten, one–page, double–spaced with one–inch margins.

The summary should answer:

1. What is the author(s) primary idea?
2. What methods and data were used to support or investigate the idea?
3. What results were obtained?
4. How did the author(s) interpret the results?

The critique may consider one or two of the follow questions (or others as appropriate):

1. Did the empirical evidence adequately investigate the conjecture?
2. Was the author(s) interpretation of the results appropriate?
3. Did the paper consider and evaluate alternative explanations for the results?
4. Were all relevant results or sources considered?

2. An three–to five–page paper.

Research Proposal Objective:

1. To develop a narrative statement of your preliminary research topical area;
2. To develop a research question and/or begin narrowing down a list of research questions;
3. To write about and describe any difficulties you are encountering in the process of converting your research topic to a research question

Research Proposal Steps:

1. Write a one page summary of current literature review.
2. Write out your research question(s) and provide a narrative of the pathway that has led you to it.
3. Use economic theory to develop a framework to evaluate your research issues.
4. Present empirical evidence then.
5. Attach copies of your research sources to your completed paper.

- List your sources at the end of the paper using a standard bibliographic reference style. The paper should be about three to five, typewritten doubled-spaces pages (with one-inch margins).
- Due date: A polished draft of this paper is due on the last course.

In-class Presentation

Each student is required to give two small presentations for 25-30 minutes during the third section of every lecture to discuss a paper.

Students could choose papers from the reading list or any other paper that interests you.

Presentation Schedule: Starting from Week 9, No Presentation on Week 14 (Midterm), Last Presentation on Week 17.